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PRESIDENTIAL EVENING READING

February 4, 1992

Coup Attempt in Venezuela

The Venezuelan Defense Minister announced at 13:00 Washington time that the rebels had surrendered and the coup attempt was over. Embassy Caracas reports pockets of resistance in Valencia, a major provincial city, but these pose no threat to the government of Carlos Andres Perez. CAP is firmly in control while mopping up operations continue and the government prepares to maintain calm for the night. CAP temporarily suspended a number of constitutional guarantees, including the right of assembly, and transportation. We expect the suspensions will be lifted soon.

The coup attempt appears to have been the work of a group of mid level army officers. Their objective apparently was to kill or capture CAP. There is no indication of popular support for the coup plotters, nor so far as we know now, any support from the other services or the top army commanders.

There appear to have been at least twelve deaths during the coup attempt, although we have no confirmed numbers. The situation in Caracas is calm.

CAP will probably move aggressively now to purge the army of rebel officers. Opposition political leaders have already expressed their strong solidarity with CAP and the constitutional government, and will support CAP through the end

of the crisis.

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PGOV-Coup Attempt
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